

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please add the following paragraph before the first paragraph beginning at page 1, line 1:

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims the benefit of U.S. provisional application serial no. 60/433,313 filed December 13, 2002, which is incorporated herein by reference.

The present invention relates to a system and a method for on-the-fly switching between multiple description coding (MDC) and scalable coding (SC), based on channel characteristics. The system and method of the present invention can also be realized using a scalable or prioritized coded stream and forward error correction (FEC) protection.